

## Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07 L-03

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DIWY-01 IO-13 /092 W

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FM AMEMBASSY BRIDGETOWN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1416

INFO AMEMBASSY GEORGETOWN

AMEMBASSY KINGSTON

AMEMBASSY NASSAU

AMEMBASSY PORT OF SPAIN

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE BRIDGETOWN 1732

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, PINR, PGOV

SUBJ:PRIME MINISTER ADAMS RESPONDS TO THE PRESS

SUMMARY

THE NEW PRIME MINISTER, J.M.G. ADAMS OF THE VICTORIOUS BARBADOS LABOUR PARTY, RESPONDED TO THE PRESS ON TELEVISION ON SEPTEMBER 9, EXACTLY A WEEK AFTER THE ELECTIONS. THE QUESTIONS ASKED OF ADAMS ELICITED THE NEW GOVT'S PRIORITY CONCERNS: GOVERNMENT RESTRUCTURING, THE INVESTIGATION OF ABUSES ALLEGED OF THE PREVIOUS GOVT, INCLUDING THE ACQUISITION OF A SHIP FROM THE US GOVT AND AGRICULTURAL LAND SPECUALTION, PRIVION FOR THE ACQUISITION BY PLANTATION TENANTS OF THEIR TENANTRIES, WOMAN'S RIGHTS, THE ABOLITION OF THE 5 PERCENT SALES TAX, AND PUBLIC WORKS. ADAMS CLAIMS THAT HIS PARTY DID NOT -- AS FORMER PRIMIN BARROW CHARGED AFTER THE

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ELECTION-- "MOBILIZE" 10,000 UNEMPLOYED YOUTH AT 30 DOLLARS

PER YOUTH FOR THE CAMPAIGN. IF THE UNEMPLOYED SUPPORTED THE BLP, IT WAS BECAUSE THE DLP HAD FAILED THEM, THE BLP OFFERED HOPE. THE BLP, ACCORDING TO THE PRIMIN, CANNOT BE CALLED ANTI-LABOR SIMPLY BECAUSE ITS CANDIDATE SUCCESSFULLY CONTESTED THE SEAT OF ONE WHO HAPPENS TO BE THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE ISLAND'S CHIEF UNION. ADAMS ALSO DISCLAIMED ANOTHER VIEW: THAT HIS PARTY IS THE PARTY OF "CONSERVATISM."

1. PRIME MINISTER J.M. G. "TOM" ADAMS, WHOSE GOVERNMENT WAS ELECTED TO OFFICE ON SEPTEMBER 2, APPEARED BEFORE THE PRESS IN A TELEVISED INTERVIEW LAST NIGHT (SEPT. 9), HIS FIRST PRESS CONFERENCE SINCE TAKING OFFICE. TOWARDS THE END OF THE HALF-HOUR INTERVIEW, ONE OF THE THREE NEWSMEN QUESTIONING ADAMS ELICITED FROM THE NEW PRIMIN A LISTING OF WHAT HE CONSIDERS THE FIRST PRIORITIES OF THE NEW GOVT. THESE ARE:

(A) GOVERNMENT RESTRUCTURING: SOME MEMBERS OF THE HOUSE OF ASSEMBLY OF THE RULING PARTY NOT APPOINTED AS MINISTERS, OR PARLIAMENTARY SECRETARIES, WILL BE DESIGNATED CHAIRMAN OF THREE GOVT STATUTORY BOARDS. THEY ARE--DAVID SIMMONS, NATIONAL HOUSING CORPORATION; RICHARD CHELTENHAM, INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT CORPORATION, AND MAURICE WARD, BOARD OF TOURISM. (ADMAMS HAS ALREADY REDUCED THE NUMBER OF MINISTRIES FROM 11 TO 9 WITHOUT HOWEVER REDUCING THE NUMBER OF GOVT AGENCIES; THERE HAS SIMPLY BEEN A CONSOLIDATION OF THESE AGENCIES UNDER THE LESSER NUMBER OF MINISTRIES. ADAMS STATED AT THE PRESS CONFERENCE THAT THIS WOULD RESULT IN NO REDUCTION IN GOVT EMPLOYMENT BUT THAT THE CONSOLIDATION WOULD SAVE BARBADOS \$BDS 132,000 ANNUALLY. ABUSES: ADAMS BEGAN BY CITING "THE NORTH POINT", A TERM UTTERED FREQUENTLY IN THE CAMPAIGN BY THE BLP IN OPPOSITION AND ONE THAT CAME TO REQUIRE NO EXPLANATION, A WORD WHOSE CONTENT WAS IMMEDIATELY KNOWN BY ALL, A SORT OF BARBADIAN EQUIVALENT TO "WATERGATE". EARLIER IN THE CONFERENCE, ADAMS HAD BEEN ASKED ABOUT THE ACQUISITION OF THE VESSEL "NORTH POINT" BY THE FORMER GOVERNMENT, AN ACQUISITION THAT BECAME A CONTROVERSIAL ISSUE DURING LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE CAMPAIGN. ADAMS STATED THE INTENTION OF HIS GOVT TO EXAMINE THE CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE VESSEL'S ACQUISITION. HE HAD, HE SAID, ALREADY READ A FILE ON THE SUBJECT BUT HAS YET TO HAVE ACCESS TO FORMER PRIMIN BARROW'S "SECRET FILE" ON THE DEAL. ADAMS WOULD NOT GO FURTHER INTO THE MATTER AT THIS TIME -- "OFFICIAL SECRETS" CONSIDERATIONS, FOR ONE THING, WOULD PRECLUDE THAT --BUT HE WOULD SAY THAT TO HIM THE

PURCHASE OF THE NORTH POINT DID REPRESENT A "CASUAL APPROACH TO THE EXPENDITURE OF GOVT FUNDS" . . . "AN ARRANGEMENT MADE BETWEEN FRIENDS ON AN IMPULSE IN THE LAST DAYS OF A GOVT WHICH HAD LOST SIGHT OF ITS RESPONSIBILITIES." (FYI: THE NORTH POINT IS A US-BUILT LST, PURCHASED FROM THE US GOVT BY THE GOVT OF BARBADOS FOR US\$52,000. END FYI). ADAMS, IN HIS REMARKS, DID NOT COMMENT ON THE US GOVT AS SELLER, ONLY ON THE GOB AS BUYER.

THE PREVENTION OF SPECULATION IN AGRICULTURAL LAND WAS ANOTHER ABUSE. (FYI: ADAMS DID NOT ELABORATE. THE MEMBERS OF THE PREVIOUS GOVT, INCLUDING PRIMIN BARROW, WERE WIDELY SUSPECTED OF HAVING ENRICHED THEMSELVES THROUGH LAND SPECULATION. END FYI).

(C) THE ACQUISITION BY PLANTATION TENANTS OF THEIR TENANTRIES.

(D) THE ADVANCEMENT OF WOMENS RIGHTS.

(E) THE ABOLITION OF THE 5 PERCENT SALES TAX

(F) SUCH PUBLIC WORKS AS PLAYING FIELDS.

2. AS TO FORMER PRIME MINISTER BARROW'S POST ELECTION CHARGE THAT THE BLP HAD "MOBILIZED" 10,000 UNEMPLOYED YOUTHS AT 30DOLLARS A WEEK PER YOUTH FOR THE CAMPAIGN, ADAMS CALLED THAT NONSENSE. BY HIS CALCULATION, THAT WOULD HAVE BEEN AN EXPENDITURE OF A MILLION DOLLARS (BARBADOS) WHICH, IF IT HAD IT, HIS PARTY WOULD HAVE USED FOR PURPOSES MORE BENEFICIAL TO BARBADOS. THAT THE UNEMPLOYED SUPPORTED THE BLP WAS DUE TO THE FACT LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THAT THE DLP HAD FAILED THEM, THAT THE BLP OFFERED HOPE.

3. ASKED ABOUT REPORTS THAT THERE IS EMNITY BETWEEN THE BLP AND THE BARBADOS WORKERS UNION, ADAMS DENIED THIS. THE BLP CANDIDATE, VICTOR JOHNSON, HAD SUCCESSFULLY CONTESTED THE SEAT HELD BY THE GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE BWU, FRANK WALCOTT, FOUNDING MEMBER OF THE DLP. BUT THE BLP HAS NEVER BEEN OPPOSED TO THE BWU NOR, FOR THAT MATTER, TO WALCOTT HIMSELF.

4. ADAMS DENIED THE VIEW EXPRESSED BY SOME THAT THE BLP IS THE PARTY OF CONSERVATISM. ONCE, ADAMS OBSERVED, THERE WERE TWO PARTIES IN BARBADOS CALLING THEMSELVES "LABOUR"PARTIES, THE BLP AND THE DLP, AND A THIRD

CALLING ITSELF "CONSERVATIVE." IN THE YEARS  
PRECEDING INDEPENDENCE, THIS LAST COULD MUSTER ABOUT 20  
PERCENT OF THE VOTE, AND THIS SHRANK TO ABOUT 6PERCENT  
IMMEDIATELY BEFORE INDEPENDENCE. THAT THE REMNANTS OF  
THOSE OF THIS PERSUASION CHOSE (IF INDEED THEY DID)  
THE BLP OVER THE DLP DID NOT MAKE THE FORMER THE  
"CONSERVATIVE" PARTY. ADAMS SAID THAT THOSE WHO WOULD  
SO IDENTIFY THE BLP DESIRE TO STIR RACIAL ANIMOSITY  
AGAINST THE BLP (BY THE IMPLICATION THAT IT IS THE  
PARTY OF BARBADOS' SMALL MINORITY OF WHITE PEOPLE.)

5. THE NEW PRIME MINISTER SAID THAT PARLIAMENT WOULD  
HAVE ITS STATE OPENING IN ABOUT THREE WEEKS, "FOR THE  
CIVIL SERVANTS WANTED TIME TO PUT THE GOVERNOR GENERAL'S  
SPEECH TOGETHER."

6. COMMENT: ADAMS RESPONSES INDICATE THAT THE BLP  
-- AS EXPECTED -- INTEND NO RADICAL OR SWEEPING CHANGES  
IN THE GOVERNANCE OF THE ISLAND. THE HEAT GENERATED  
BY THE CAMPAIGN HAS NOT YET SUBSIDED, AND INDEED MAY  
NOT UNTIL THE NEW GOVT HAS CEASED ITS EXAMINATION  
OF THE LAST GOVERNMENT'S "ABUSES". THE SUBJECT OF ONE  
OF THESE, THE PURCHASE OF THE NORTH POINT, COULD CAUSE  
CRITICISM OF THE USG AS SELLER OF THE VESSEL BUT HAS  
YET TO DO SO. BARBADIAN POLITICS HAS BEEN LIKENED TO A  
CRICKET MATCH. THE DLP, AFTER A LONG INNING, ARE OUT.  
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THE BLP ARE AT BAT.  
BRITTON

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